United Nations A/56/1000–S/2002/737

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
11 July 2002

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 43

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report describes the continued implementation of the Bonn Agreement, including the successful conclusion of the Emergency Loya Jirga held from 11 to 19 June 2002. Despite some imperfections in the nomination and selection of delegates and incidents of intimidation during the Loya Jirga itself, it is noteworthy that such an enormous logistical undertaking was carried out within a very tight schedule and accomplished the tasks of electing the Head of State and approving the structures and appointment of the Transitional Authority.

The report also outlines the continuing challenges faced by both the Transitional Authority and the international community. One of the most important tasks ahead is to ensure sufficient funding for humanitarian and recovery activities. The report describes the organizational and operational progress made by the United Nations system in the areas of humanitarian relief, recovery and reconstruction. However, it also notes that donor funding has slowed dramatically, affecting the United Nations capacity to process the return of refugees as well as the Government's ability to fund its basic services and extend its presence beyond Kabul.

Another major cause for concern remains the issue of security. While the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has made a very positive impact on the security situation in Kabul, continuing insecurity in many parts of the country entails the risk of impeding progress on the political front. It has also affected humanitarian activities. The Secretary-General therefore strongly advocates a limited expansion of ISAF beyond Kabul.

02-47009 (E) 150702

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1401 (2002), adopted on 28 March 2002, and General Assembly resolution 56/220 A, adopted on 21 December 2001. It covers the period since the previous report on this item was issued on 18 March 2002 (A/56/875-S/2002/278).

II. Implementation of the Bonn Agreement: establishment and progress of the Interim Administration

2. Implementation of the Bonn Agreement of 5 December 2001, in which Afghan parties pledged to engage in a process of transition to a freely elected constitutional and democratic Government, represents the best chance to put an end to 23 years of war in Afghanistan. As a result of that Agreement, on 22 December 2001 an Interim Administration was established under the chairmanship of Hamid Karzai. The Interim Administration led Afghanistan for six months, before transferring power to a Transitional Authority established through the Emergency Loya Jirga, held from 11 to 19 June 2002 in accordance with the terms of the Bonn Agreement.

3. The Interim Administration faced a number of difficult tasks at its inception. Most importantly, it faced a fractured and decentralized disposition of power throughout Afghanistan. The long years of war had produced and sustained numerous armed factions with vested economic and political interests in the areas they controlled. As a result, a pattern of fragmented military rule under various commanders from different political and ethnic backgrounds filled much of the vacant political space created by the fall of the Taliban. These commanders publicly endorsed the Bonn Agreement and the Interim Administration, but at the same time kept their options open, having much to lose by ceding their economic and political power to the central authorities. Some were loyal to members of the Interim Administration, but this did not necessarily make them loyal to the Administration itself. Such a pattern of fragmentation has been particularly evident in the Pashtun-populated areas of the south and east, due to the sudden demise of the Taliban and ongoing operations against Taliban and Al-Qa'idah remnants.

4. As a result, in many parts of the country the relationship between the provincial governments and the central Government has been distant and unstructured. Attempts to extend centralized control have frequently been thwarted by regional military figures and governors who have continued, in many cases, to place their own interests above the national interest.

5. Faced with these considerable challenges, the Interim Administration attempted, with very few resources and no real army or security force, to extend its writ beyond Kabul. Its accomplishments in this regard were limited, though they were perhaps greater than most observers have suggested. Against a wave of opposition in drug-producing areas, for example, the Interim Administration demonstrated its commitment to poppy eradication by issuing and partly implementing a decree against the cultivation and export of opium, under which poppy with an estimated street value of $8 billion was destroyed.

6. With the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-administered Afghan Interim Authority Fund, the Interim Administration was able to pay the salaries of teachers and civil servants in Kabul and some provinces. For the first six months of the year, this fund will have paid monthly salaries to 197,000 civil servants. The fund was also used to coordinate responses to several humanitarian crises outside Kabul, including the earthquake in Nahrin. The Interim Administration adopted a number of decrees on issues such as army recruitment, national and international investment law, rebuilding of schools and the protection of forests.

7. The Interim Administration's efforts to extend its influence and control have been hampered above all by the limited resources at its disposal. These limitations have affected its ability to provide services, build roads and create jobs. In the absence of a visible peace dividend in certain parts of the country, local populations have continued to turn to regional commanders and existing local authorities for support, thereby strengthening already dominant regional identities at the expense of both the central Government and national unity. On a more positive note, a growing number of Afghans seek to strengthen links with the central Government as a counterweight to local power structures, which are often associated with military rule. Appeals to the central Government

will no doubt increase if it is able to demonstrate accountability and effectiveness.

8. The Interim Administration's limited ability to raise revenue was largely due to the fact that customs duties were captured by regional authorities to support their own administrations, thereby reducing their dependency on Kabul and strengthening their personal and political power.

9. Much of the cost of the Interim Administration, including rehabilitation of basic infrastructure in addition to civil service salaries, was borne by the international community through donations to the Afghan Interim Authority Fund. Following the inauguration of the Transitional Administration, the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, established to meet longer-term needs, assumed responsibility for paying civil service salaries during the transitional Government, pending the development of a sufficient revenue base.

III. Implementation of the Bonn Agreement: the commissions

10. The Bonn Agreement provides for the establishment of a number of commissions, namely, a Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga, a Human Rights Commission, a Civil Service Commission and a Judicial Commission.

11. The establishment of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga was announced by Chairman Karzai in my presence, during my visit to Afghanistan on 25 January 2002. The Loya Jirga process and the role of the Special Commission are described in greater detail below (see paras. 28-42).

12. The Judicial Commission, which consists of 16 eminent Afghan scholars, legal practitioners and jurists, was established by decree on 21 May. A subsequent decree was promulgated on 6 June by the Chairman of the Interim Administration. It outlines the specific powers and functions of the Commission, which is tasked under the Bonn Agreement with rebuilding the domestic justice system in accordance with Islamic principles, international standards, the rule of law and Afghan legal traditions. Several working groups are to be set up on different thematic issues related to the Afghan justice sector. Each working group will be chaired by a member of the Judicial Commission, with other members of the Commission, external consultants and experts participating in and contributing to its work.

13. The decree describing the functions and powers of the Civil Service Commission was finalized some time ago, but the Commission itself has not yet been established. It now seems that President Karzai may decide to expand its mandate to cover all aspects of administrative reform under the leadership of one of the Vice-Presidents.

14. The Human Rights Commission, comprising experts, both men and women, from all major ethnic groups, was established by decree on 6 June. This Commission was the product of a national consultative process between Afghan human rights activists, the Interim Administration and the United Nations. Consultations were held on the following themes: the development of a national programme of human rights education; approaches to human rights monitoring, investigation and remedial action; and the advancement of the rights of women. The mandate of the Commission is daunting, but its successful implementation will be of great service to the ongoing transition in Afghanistan. The Commissioners deserve the full support of the international community. Shortly after the Loya Jirga, President Karzai named Sima Samar, former Minister for Women's Affairs, as Chairperson of the Commission.

15. The human rights situation in Afghanistan clearly requires the presence of strong human rights institutions. In recent weeks, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has had to approach local and national authorities on a range of human rights problems, including inhumane conditions in the Shiberghan prison, attacks on minorities and aid workers in the north, and scattered acts of Loya Jirga-related intimidation around the country. My Special Representative and his staff have consistently intervened with local commanders, regional authorities and national officials, and have insisted on full accountability for perpetrators.

16. In this respect, the lack of progress and transparency regarding the investigation into the murder of the Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Abdul Rahman, four months after his killing is deeply disappointing. The politically motivated arrests and

month-long detention — without trial or the issuing of charges — of alleged Hezb-e-Islami activists in April by the National Directorate for Security highlighted the need to bring the security services under the rule of law. In this regard, President Karzai's promise to establish a commission to overhaul the National Directorate for Security is a welcome development.

17. With regard to freedom of the press, after the issuance in February 2002 of a "press law decree" that elicited much criticism for its prescriptive nature, the Ministry of Information and Culture issued a statement on the reconstruction and development of media in Afghanistan. The statement announced a thorough review of media policy based on the recognition of the role of the press as a major factor of transparency and accountability in Afghanistan.

IV. Security

18. Security in Afghanistan remains a cause for concern. In addition to actions by ex-Taliban and Al-Qa'idah forces that explicitly oppose the Bonn process, the presence of armed factions that nominally support the process continues to pose a threat to the consolidation of peace and civil government in the country. This is particularly problematic in the north, where a long-standing rivalry between the Jumbesh and Jamiat factions negatively affects the general security situation. This rivalry has prevented the establishment of effective security in Mazar city, despite the efforts of the Interim Administration and UNAMA to establish a separation of forces and a neutral, multi-ethnic police force. In this context of impunity and insecurity, a number of armed attacks and robberies have been carried out against international aid organizations in the last several weeks. Most serious and contemptible was the attack on a female international aid worker. My Special Representative intervened at both the national and the local level to insist that this alarming situation be addressed and that those responsible for these criminal acts be held accountable under the law. Regrettably, these incidents, as well as the earlier murder of a local United Nations staff member, have yet to be properly followed up by the authorities. No credible measures to address these security problems have been taken at the time of writing of this report. On 6 July, a few days after the draft of the present report was finalized, Vice-President Haji Abdul Qadir was assassinated in Kabul. I was deeply disturbed and saddened by this murder, and I have urged the Afghan authorities to conduct a thorough investigation so as to bring the perpetrators to justice.

19. Sporadic fighting and skirmishes have also occurred in Uruzgan, Laghman, Kunar, Wardak, Paktia, Khost and Nimruz provinces. Disputed governorships have destabilized several provinces, with the central Government frequently unable to quell military opposition to Governors it has legitimately named.

20. Absent truly national security forces and the expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghanistan remains hostage to this prevailing insecurity. Lack of tangible improvement in the security situation could seriously undermine the political and reconstruction efforts.

21. In this regard, I welcome progress made towards the reform of the security sector during two special meetings of donors in Geneva in April and May. At both meetings, the Interim Administration produced progressive and comprehensive papers outlining its vision of an armed force of 80,000 men, which would be overseen by a national security council and a defence council. A budget of $300 million for the armed forces was proposed for the next year. The budget includes payment of salaries, provision of basic equipment and the renovation of barracks. UNAMA has established a trust fund for the payment of salaries and the provision of non-lethal equipment for the Afghan armed forces, and UNDP has established a law and order trust fund for integrated donor support to meet the costs of police salaries and capacity-building. Together with the nations designated to lead the various subsectors of security sector reform,[1] UNAMA believes that institutional reform of the security sector and civilian oversight are necessary.

22. A concrete achievement in the security sector has been the creation of the first battalion of the National Guard, which was trained by ISAF. The battalion performed impeccably its assigned task of providing security for the Loya Jirga site. The United States of America has started an 18-month training programme that, it is hoped, will eventually provide 11,500 troops for the new Afghan army and border guard, and France is carrying out a parallel army training programme.

[1] The United States for the training of the armed forces; the United Kingdom for counter-narcotics; Italy for the justice sector; Germany for the police; and UNAMA/Japan for reintegration and demobilization.

23. Serious problems, however, were encountered in assembling an ethnically and regionally balanced group of recruits for the first battalion of the National Guard. Similar difficulties are being experienced by the United States and French trainers. In addition, well over one third of the soldiers of the first battalion have, regrettably, left the unit since completing their training, due to a lack of support from the Ministry of Defence. This experience foreshadows the difficulty that will be faced during the creation and training of new armed forces in the absence of genuinely agreed national structures to form, house, equip and deploy these forces. The announcement of the establishment of a Commission for the specific purpose of creating the national army is a step in the right direction. This Commission must now begin to work earnestly and effectively.

24. It is important to realize that these new units will not be able to provide adequate security in Afghanistan for many months to come. In particular, they will not be available for most of the critical transitional period of the next 18 months. I therefore continue to believe that a limited expansion of ISAF to areas outside of Kabul would make a huge contribution to the consolidation of peace, and should be considered.

25. In Kabul, ISAF has continued to have a very positive impact on security, in conjunction with the Afghan police and other domestic security forces. The Joint Coordination Body, bringing together the Ministries of Defence and Interior, ISAF and UNAMA, continues to provide a forum for the discussion, coordination and resolution of security issues in Kabul. An example of the progress made in the field of security cooperation between the domestic security agencies, ISAF and UNAMA was the comprehensive security plan drawn up by these parties for the protection of the Emergency Loya Jirga.

26. In this context, I welcome the fact that on 23 May the Security Council extended ISAF's mandate for another six months beyond 20 June. On 20 June, the Turkish armed forces assumed command of ISAF from the United Kingdom. I take this opportunity to congratulate Major General McColl and the British headquarters battalion on their steadfast performance during the first mandate of ISAF. I also express the gratitude of the United Nations to the Turkish Government and the other troop contributors for their critical and ongoing contribution to the consolidation of peace in Afghanistan.

27. Regarding the creation of a new Afghan police force, Germany, as lead nation, has been making progress. A total of 82 officers have so far completed the "train the trainers" course. These newly appointed police trainers are scheduled to begin training 3,200 officers in the first week of August. Also, India has agreed to train an additional 220 officers in specialized areas, including investigation techniques, logistics and personnel management. To ensure that the police do not operate in a legal vacuum, however, it is important that the new Judicial Commission expeditiously formulate its programme, and that the Transitional Administration translate that programme into specific reforms.

V. Emergency Loya Jirga process

28. In my report dated 18 March 2002, I stressed the importance of the Emergency Loya Jirga and the overwhelming support it enjoyed among the Afghan population. At the same time, I expressed concern that, given the high political stakes of the Loya Jirga, political pressure would be applied by those who sought to gain or maintain positions of power. Developments since then have borne out this assessment, though the fact that the Loya Jirga took place at all, despite political and logistical difficulties, is a significant achievement.

29. The process of selecting approximately 1,000 delegates from 390 districts of Afghanistan, which began on 16 April in the north-western region and ended on 6 June in Kabul, demonstrated the extraordinary support that the Loya Jirga enjoyed throughout the country, in spite of the marked ethnic and political differences within and between the regions of Afghanistan. For seven weeks, teams organized by the Special Independent Commission, accompanied by UNAMA staff and international monitors, criss-crossed the country, reaching out to the most remote settlements. Most of the time, they received a very positive response from the population as thousands, and sometimes tens of thousands, gathered in district assemblies to participate in the Loya Jirga process. The 200 women delegates selected for the Loya Jirga were particularly active. The additional fact that more than 20 of them were elected is not insignificant, given the severe oppression of women by the Taliban over the last five years.

30. As expected, the Loya Jirga process was not without difficulties. Some were of a logistical nature, since access to a number of districts was inhibited by geography or weather conditions. Other problems related to the state of insecurity that existed due to tensions or open conflict between tribes and local commanders in some regions. These problems were particularly evident in the south-east (Gardez), the north (Mazar-e-Sharif) and the westernmost districts of the Hazarajat (Daikundi). A broader problem resulted from the very success of the Loya Jirga process. Indeed, while the momentum of the Emergency Loya Jirga muted the criticism heard from some extremist groups at the beginning of the process, its obvious importance prodded certain commanders to seek political legitimacy through the Loya Jirga. As a result, attempts by local commanders and authorities to control the outcome of the selection process by money or by intimidation were evident in different regions at one time or another. Incidents in a dozen districts were deemed serious enough by the members of the Special Independent Commission to warrant the cancellation of district elections.

31. There were several incidents of intimidation during the Loya Jirga itself, some involving the National Directorate for Security, and further incidents in the aftermath of the consultation. My Special Representative consistently addressed these cases, including through his strong representations to Governors, commanders and the highest authorities of the Interim Administration, urging them to cooperate with the Special Independent Commission and to take firm steps to protect the integrity of the Loya Jirga and its delegates.

32. While the United Nations was determined to do everything possible to help prevent and correct abuses of power, it was in the nature of an open and public consultative exercise like the Loya Jirga to reflect the reality of the power structure in the country. In that light, keeping commanders out of the Loya Jirga process proved impossible. It could also be argued that it was not desirable. The Loya Jirga provided an opportunity not only for the people of Afghanistan to express their views, but also for the power structure inherited from decades of war to resolve internal differences through political means rather than by violence. In this spirit, the Interim Administration asked the Commission to invite the Governors and other selected leaders to participate in the Loya Jirga. The Interim Administration considered that, in the fragile context of a country emerging from decades of conflict, and where military operations are in fact ongoing, engaging the various factions politically was a necessity.

33. The United Nations and the international community also gave critical logistical support to the Special Independent Commission and the Loya Jirga process. This included providing transport (including an important air operation), premises and communication facilities. Contractors were called upon to prepare eight regional election sites, and the Agency for Development Cooperation (GTZ), a German non-governmental organization, rehabilitated part of the Polytechnic Institute in Kabul and installed several tents to house the Loya Jirga itself.

34. Of equal importance were the exceptional security measures provided by the joint action of the Ministries of Defence and Interior, the National Directorate for Security, the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga and ISAF. These measures succeeded in deterring action by extremist groups. Even these measures, however, could not prevent the firing of rockets at residential areas of Kabul, distant from the Polytechnic, in the last days of the Loya Jirga. Fortunately, these did not cause casualties.

35. The proceedings of the Emergency Loya Jirga reflected the current stage of the country's political development. Recurring themes throughout the speeches by delegates from the various provinces included the need to promote national unity in spite of political and ethnic differences; the need to address insecurity in many parts of the country, in particular through disarmament; the need to create a national army that would absorb the multiplicity of local and regional militias; the reform of security agencies; the need to expand education and physical reconstruction to all parts of the country; the need to bring about an ethnically balanced Government; and the need to curb corruption and patronage, directing spending at the population rather than at government officials.

36. While a strong consensus in favour of positive change prevailed on these issues, real political differences also emerged, in particular over the role of the former King and over a fundamentalist agenda put forward by some members of *jihadi* parties. Chairman Karzai emerged from these confrontations as a

consensus candidate for the presidency of the Transitional Administration. Elected overwhelmingly by secret ballot — with 1,295 votes out of 1,575 — he proved to be reassuring to the moderates and the intellectuals, acceptable to the *jihadi* parties and the choice of those who, for ethnic or political reasons, see him as the only option to offset the weight of the Tajik Shura-e-Nazar faction. His election constituted the highlight of the Emergency Loya Jirga.

37. It is a hopeful signal for the long-term future — and a credit to the activism and organization of the women delegates — that, for the first time in Afghan history, a woman, Massouda Jalal, ran for the highest office in government, earning second place to Chairman Karzai in the secret-ballot for President. No less important, another woman was elected by secret ballot as Deputy Chairperson of the Loya Jirga. In collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, UNAMA had conducted an induction course for the women delegates to the Loya Jirga and provided advice and assistance to them throughout the assembly. A dividend of this collaboration was the creation of a national network of Afghan women delegates that will last beyond the Loya Jirga. UNAMA will continue to lend all possible assistance to the Ministry of Women's Affairs in promoting this process.

38. With regard to transitional structures, President Karzai supported the establishment, already suggested by the Special Independent Commission though not stipulated in the Bonn Agreement, of a transitional national assembly whose members would be selected from among the delegates. This idea was endorsed broadly by the Loya Jirga, but the debate bogged down in disagreements over equitable representation of different regions and ethnic groups. In the end, President Karzai suggested that the concept and the mode of election of the assembly be revisited at a later stage, based on the recommendations of an advisory committee to be selected by the Loya Jirga.

39. While discussions about a national assembly ended in deadlock, the debate on structures provided an opportunity for President Karzai to address the main concerns voiced during the first part of the Loya Jirga. In particular, he recalled the establishment of the Human Rights, Judicial and Civil Service Commissions, which would deal with some of the issues mentioned by delegates. In addition, he promised the early establishment of new national commissions to review and oversee the following areas: national security and defence; formation of a new, broad-based national army that could be trusted by all Afghans; reform of the intelligence services with a view to preventing abuses; the use of foreign assistance; balancing of radio and television programming in order to ensure that the coverage is not biased towards the Government; return of property confiscated from individuals under the communist regime and during the war; ways in which foreign investment could be facilitated and corruption curbed; and privatization of State enterprises. He also announced that mayors would be elected, that military commanders assigned to the various regions would be rotated on a regular basis in order to avoid the creation of vested interests and abuses of authority and that the new Government would include "advisory ministers" to protect the interests of special categories such as nomads and professionals.

40. Consultations undertaken by President Karzai on the last item on the agenda, key personnel of the future Transitional Administration, also proved difficult. Since Bonn, it had been understood that one of the main goals of the Emergency Loya Jirga was to form a Transitional Administration that would be more legitimate, more effective and more balanced than the Interim Administration. There was broad expectation that the new Administration would break the monopoly on security forces (army, police and intelligence services) held by Shura-e-Nazar and, in particular, its senior members from the Panjshir district.

41. On 19 June, following intense consultations, President Karzai announced the names of 14 Ministers and 3 Vice-Presidents, who were subsequently endorsed by the Loya Jirga. The intensity of the pressure that President Karzai was subjected to was demonstrated by the number of days he needed to complete selection of his Cabinet and by his failure to reduce its size (it is in fact larger than that of the Interim Administration). The final Cabinet of the Transitional Administration is composed of 5 Vice-Presidents, 3 Special or National Advisers with Cabinet status, and 30 Ministries. The ethnic balance has changed slightly, with Pashtun representation increasing to just under 50 per cent, and Tajik representation reduced to below one third. There are also three women in the Cabinet. Many observers were disappointed at the inclusion of warlords and faction leaders in the Transitional Administration. The argument of President Karzai and his supporters that

the fragile peace and national unity require the continued participation of major factional leaders will certainly be accepted both inside and outside of Afghanistan. But those leaders must live up to their commitment to national unity, and must integrate their forces within a genuinely national army and an effective national police. In other words, it is imperative for the new Government to make a consistent effort to demonstrate that it has the will and the capacity to deliver on President Karzai's commitment to reform, fairness, reinforced security, stability, national unity and reconstruction.

42. In spite of its shortcomings, the Loya Jirga process has enhanced the prospect of stabilization in Afghanistan. Its legacy includes the promotion of a new standard of legitimacy: namely, that power should be based on popular participation rather than military might — a standard that the warlords themselves had to acknowledge.

VI. Humanitarian relief, recovery and reconstruction

43. Progress has been made in the planning and implementation of UNAMA's relief, recovery and rehabilitation mandate, and in developing its relationship with the Interim Authority. The United Nations system has also made progress organizationally and operationally, with the initiation of planned coordination and management mechanisms.

44. In April, the National Development Framework presented by the Interim Administration to the donor community laid out 12 programme areas in three pillars (Humanitarian and Human/Social Capital, Physical Reconstruction and Natural Resources, and Trade and Investment). These have been organized into programme groups composed of Government, United Nations and non-governmental organization actors. For each programme area, a programme secretariat (normally a United Nations agency, multilateral institution or non-governmental organization) will be appointed to do the following: help manage the programme group, assist the Government to develop strong operational coordination mechanisms, provide technical support in the preparation of the national development budget and channel resources to national capacity-building. Extensive negotiations with the Interim Authority have now culminated in the appointment of the eight initial programme secretariats.[2]

45. United Nations agencies appointed as programme secretariats have been faced with the challenge of helping the Government prepare a national development budget for the period through 31 March 2003. The programme groups have been given responsibility for formulating and recommending national objectives, strategies and policies, and ensuring that an appropriate mix of projects, defined by need, are available for funding. UNAMA supports the national development budget process, and will assist the Government in bringing the needs of Afghanistan to the attention of donors. A process of decentralizing responsibility for area development programming to area offices and provinces has also begun, so that the United Nations and other partners can work together rapidly and flexibly to design area-appropriate programming. These programmes will make use of modest resources to catalyse integrated development in areas of the country most affected by war, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and drought.

46. Meanwhile, in January 2002, UNDP launched the Recovery and Employment Afghanistan Programme, which created more than 600,000 man-days of employment for nearly 15,000 persons. Beyond providing fair and dignified employment to participants, the initiative has to date injected $1.8 million into neighbourhoods and villages that lacked economic opportunities. UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services have also been engaged in creating jobs in 11 provinces nationwide. Most of these longer-term construction projects focus on the education, infrastructure, health, water and sanitation sectors. So far, some 3,000 unskilled and skilled workers have been employed, creating over 270,000 man-days of employment.

47. UNDP has also helped the Government to set up the donor assistance database. This system will play an increasingly useful role in informing decision-making by the Government, donors and the assistance community. In particular, disbursements will be tracked against the National Development Framework,

[2] Programme secretariats approved are: UNICEF for education, WHO for health, UN-Habitat for urban development, FAO for natural resources, UNHCR for return and reintegration, UNESCO for culture and media, the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan for the mine action subgroup, WFP for the food aid subgroup.

allowing for a clear comparison of funding to budget targets. Donors are encouraged to make their funding decisions available to this database to ensure that it is complete and up to date.

48. A central component of UNAMA's mandate is to encourage and support national capacity. The support for the payment of the salaries of government civil servants and for office rehabilitation through the Afghan Interim Authority Fund will result in more long-term and structural support. United Nations and other external actors can assist the Government in widening its tax base, establishing a well-remunerated and merit-driven civil service, tracking donor support through the donor assistance database, and coordinating assistance efforts through the programme secretariats. It is envisaged that over a three-year period the United Nations will disengage from programmes and projects more appropriately run by Afghan entities. Government capacity will be supported at the subnational level, primarily through assistance to provincial coordination bodies and to provincial Governors' offices.

49. UNAMA expects to continue its close relationship with, and support for, the Afghanistan Assistance Coordination Authority or its successor. It will also finalize and agree on a transition strategy with the Government. This strategy will outline the steps necessary to build sufficient capacity to allow the Government to take full responsibility for the provision of basic social services. In this context, United Nations agencies will be expected to develop a clear strategy for building capacity in their counterpart ministries.

50. The period under review has been notable for some substantial achievements in the humanitarian and recovery work of the United Nations, its partners and the Government. Despite progress, however, constraints remain. The space for humanitarian action has expanded due to the generally improved security situation throughout the country, but severe security limitations for aid agencies remain in some areas. Of great concern are the various attacks of the kind mentioned earlier in the present report (see para. 18), carried out against international aid organizations in the north. There are also worrying reports of increased harassment of Afghan internally displaced persons, including a number of such incidents in Sar-e-Pul and, reportedly, in Herat. Thousands of Pashtun internally displaced persons in the south are reluctant to return to their areas of origin in the north and west for fear of harassment and discrimination.

51. Despite an uncertain security situation, more than 1.1 million refugees have been assisted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to return to Afghanistan this year; 1 million of them have come from Pakistan and 85,000 from Iran. A further 500,000 are expected by December 2002. In addition, an estimated 200,000 refugees have repatriated themselves spontaneously, without assistance. Approximately 200,000 internally displaced person returns have taken place, both assisted and spontaneous. While the return of so many refugees and internally displaced persons is a positive indicator, it is of some concern that well over 50 per cent of the refugees have returned to Kabul and Jalalabad, rather than their places of origin, seriously straining the infrastructure and the provision of basic social services, especially health and education.

52. The Ministry of Education, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and a number of other stakeholders, launched a back-to-school campaign to help 1.78 million children return to school by 23 March. Initial results show that more than twice that number of children may have returned, with an estimated average of 29 per cent female participation assessed in three areas of the country. The Ministry of Education will provide more supplies to schools and accelerate the distribution of school textbooks and teaching resources to meet additional needs. In preparation for the September school term, 5,000 "schools in a box" will be supplied by UNICEF to equip 400,000 students and their teachers. UNICEF is also embarking on a programme to provide all schools with adequate water and sanitation facilities, in addition to comprehensively promoting hygiene education. The target of 1,500 schools will be met by the end of the year. UNICEF and non-governmental organizations are also making significant efforts to improve water and sanitation coverage in rural communities, especially those where large numbers of Afghans are returning.

53. In the health sector, four rounds of polio immunization have been planned for 2002. The first and second rounds were conducted in April and May and covered 5.8 million children, with women comprising a large proportion of the vaccination teams in all parts of the country for the first time in more than five years. A vitamin A campaign targeting 5 million

children was initiated this month. Other interventions have included the provision of essential drugs and medical supplies, covering some 7 million people, the development of mental health services and the rebuilding of infrastructure for reproductive health and maternal and child health care. The World Health Organization has established an office at the National Tuberculosis Institute to support the National Tuberculosis Control Programme.

54. The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan has increased its activities in 2002: 5,460,174 square metres of suspected mine-contaminated area have been surveyed and marked; 16,225,289 square metres of battle area have been marked; 32,091,000 square metres of surveyed area have been returned to communities for productive use; and 23,825,611 square metres of high priority mine- and unexploded ordinance-contaminated area was cleared during the first quarter of 2002. In addition, 4,400 mine personnel have been trained in disposal techniques for cluster bombs in battle areas.

55. In the food aid and food security sectors, the World Food Programme (WFP) has conducted 58 rapid assessment missions in rural Afghanistan. Preliminary findings highlight persistent malnutrition, indicating a pressing need for food aid in the pre-harvest hunger period. Large-scale food security programming is needed over the long term to reduce the scale of the problem next year and to address severe vulnerability in general. In the meantime, the sale of household assets continues, more children are being pushed into the labour market to support their families, and early marriages are reported to be commonplace. WFP is stepping up efforts to feed about 9 million people until the harvest in July, although the increasing numbers of returning refugees are stretching food aid resources. Overall food pipeline shortages are still a significant issue, forcing a scaling back of ration sizes and reducing WFP's ability to meet urgent needs. Of the $285 million requested to fund its projects in Afghanistan until the end of year, a total of $102 million is still lacking, representing a shortfall of 175,000 tons of food.

56. The joint WFP/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations crop assessment mission has begun in Afghanistan, and information on all areas will be available shortly. There is a marked rise in expected agricultural output in most parts of the country, because of higher annual rainfall in early 2002 compared with that of the last three years. Despite this, preliminary indications are that drought may continue in the southern, eastern and central parts of the country. Lack of precipitation and snow cover has been a factor in the resumption of poppy cultivation, since poppies are drought-resistant and farmers need to irrigate a far smaller area for the same economic gain.

57. Nutrition assessments undertaken by UNICEF, WFP and non-governmental organization partners in recent months have highlighted high levels of chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies among women and children in particular, especially in drought-affected areas. This analysis points to the need for continued targeting of food aid to the most vulnerable populations. During May 2002, the extent of Afghanistan's vulnerability crisis was confirmed in a study conducted by Tufts University. This assessment — the broadest conducted since the recent crisis began — was based on a survey of 1,100 households. It focused attention on the cumulative effects of drought and conflict on the vulnerability and coping strategies of Afghan households. The main finding of the study was that despite recent improvements in the political environment, increased aid and more favourable recent weather patterns, food insecurity and socio-economic vulnerabilities across the country were likely to persist over the next 18 months, requiring continued and substantial emergency programming. A key implication of the report was that conditions were likely to deteriorate further in view of the higher-than-expected numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees returning to vulnerable areas of the country.

58. It is clear that a humanitarian crisis of considerable magnitude will continue well into next year. The key challenge for the United Nations and its partners is to help as many people as possible escape their vulnerable status through recovery programmes while continuing to address humanitarian needs. We will be able to meet this challenge only with the timely and generous support of the international community, particularly those donors who made generous commitments at the Tokyo Conference in January.

VII. Mission support

59. The mission support component of UNAMA has concentrated on the provision of the immediate support requirements to establish UNAMA and concurrent

logistic support for the Loya Jirga. Effective communications have been established for all seven regional offices. Medical support has been provided and will be further enhanced with the addition of a clinic in the autumn. Air operations have been established, and an aviation safety programme is in place. Training is under way to meet the immediate needs of international and national staff: courses have been held in driver training, first aid and local cultural awareness. In the longer term, training will be a key element in the mission's ability to reduce international mission support staff. Work has therefore begun to develop English-language training and computer courses for national staff and to identify further training needs. Priorities for the mission support component in the coming period include the continuing integration of elements of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan into UNAMA, and the preparation of logistics and administrative plans to ensure that the mission is able to function effectively throughout the winter.

VIII. Observations

60. **The peace process initiated in Bonn continues to move forward, albeit slowly. So far, all the steps provided for in the Bonn Agreement have been implemented in a timely fashion. It should not be forgotten that the Bonn process is just that: a process, and a long one. Nor should it be forgotten that the fall of the Taliban only ended the large-scale fighting between large military formations. The other factions have neither disbanded nor disarmed; nor have they been integrated into any sort of national formation.**

61. **The Taliban themselves have not formally given up. They may have been significantly weakened, with those left being effectively contained by the anti-terrorist coalition headed by the United States of America. But they are still present, along with remnants of Al-Qa'idah.**

62. **The Emergency Loya Jirga was prepared and held against this background of limited progress, during the short period — six months — since the Bonn Conference. I had repeatedly warned that the Loya Jirga would be a major challenge, and that many difficulties would need to be overcome to make it happen. My Special Representative also conveyed this message on every occasion.**

63. **That expectations were high, and reached unrealistically high levels as the Loya Jirga assembled, is a tribute both to the achievements of the Interim Administration of Afghanistan and the work of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga. The support of the United Nations for that Commission has been recognized widely.**

64. **It is noteworthy that an enormous logistical undertaking such as the Loya Jirga, with all the attendant political complexities and sensitivities, was carried out within the very tight schedule provided for in Bonn. During the 10 days in which delegates were assembled, no significant security incidents occurred, and the Loya Jirga managed to complete all three tasks set forth in Bonn: election of the Head of State, approval of the structures and appointment of the "key personnel" of the Transitional Authority. The election by Afghans of their first leader after 23 years of conflict, in what was widely considered to have been as close as possible to a free and fair ballot, was a major achievement, as was the participation of an unprecedented number of women delegates.**

65. **Although there were imperfections in the nomination and selection of delegates, the members of the Loya Jirga ultimately constituted a representative sampling of Afghan society. Furthermore, despite efforts at intimidation, many delegates showed great courage and determination by speaking out and expressing controversial positions on a wide range of issues. Delegates realized that most of their important problems and concerns — security, health, education, jobs — were shared by others throughout the country, and many urged that differences be set aside for the sake of national unity. These moments provided hope that the first tentative steps in the process of national reconciliation and unity have now been taken.**

66. **The United Nations has fulfilled its mandate with respect to the Loya Jirga, but its role and responsibilities do not end here. In the coming months, the United Nations system and the international community, in accordance with their mandate, must do their best to assist President Karzai and his Administration. The main tasks**

ahead will be the establishment of a constitutional commission for the drafting of a new Constitution; the convening, within 18 months, of a constitutional Loya Jirga; and preparations for general elections.

67. If the peace process is to succeed, humanitarian and recovery activities must continue alongside these critical political steps. However, donor funding has followed an uneven pattern since the launch of the United Nations Donor Alert in October 2001. Until mid-April 2002, funding made available through the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme, the Afghan Interim Authority Fund and bilateral channels amounted to more than $1.1 billion. However, since mid-April, resource flows for humanitarian and recovery activities have slowed dramatically. This slowdown in donor disbursements has caused potentially serious disruptions to programmes addressing the most urgent needs around the country, particularly programmes supporting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Of even greater concern is the lack of funding available to the Government to fund its basic services and extend its presence beyond Kabul.

68. In order to fulfil its mandate, and to justify the trust placed in the United Nations by the Afghan people, UNAMA will continue its innovative programme of integration so as to make the best and most efficient use of United Nations assets in Afghanistan. In addition to integrating all elements of the Mission, the United Nations will continue to seek modalities of cooperation with the Transitional Administration that enhance capacity-building and facilitate the eventual transfer of programmes to a competent Afghan Government. The United Nations will also continue to work closely with the international community to ensure that relief, recovery and reconstruction proceed in a timely, coordinated and well-resourced manner.

69. Continuing insecurity in many parts of the country entails the risk of impeding, or even setting back, progress on the political front. In northern Afghanistan in particular, repeated attacks on humanitarian workers have created a climate that has led many aid organizations to consider cutting or curtailing their operations in the region. It is up to local authorities to honour their commitment to address the lack of security and bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice. Otherwise, this trend could also affect the willingness of donors to invest in recovery and reconstruction projects in the region, which is one of the neediest areas of the country. Until a national army has been formed, and in the absence of an ISAF presence outside of Kabul, this climate of insecurity will be difficult to eliminate. I continue, therefore, to strongly advocate a limited expansion of ISAF beyond Kabul.

70. As the peace process moves forward, there are bound to be new problems, and perhaps even setbacks. President Karzai and his team, along with the people of Afghanistan and the international community, must continue to work together on all fronts — political, security, humanitarian and recovery — with patience and determination, and with neither complacency nor needless panicking, to ensure that peace is consolidated and stability is achieved.

71. Finally, I want to thank my Special Representative and the entire UNAMA team very warmly for their commitment and dedication in helping to bring the Afghan peace process successfully through the Loya Jirga and into the Transitional Administration phase. UNAMA staff members, under the wise and inspired leadership of Lakhdar Brahimi, have endured difficult conditions, long hours, much stress and no rest over the past six months. Yet they have delivered quality results in all of their activities, be they political, humanitarian, developmental, logistical or administrative. I look forward to the continued success of this very important Mission.